



PRESS RELEASE

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**PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOOD DEFENDANT PLEADS TO
FELON IN POSSESSION OF AMMUNITION**

Tampa, Florida - United States Attorney Paul I. Perez today announced that Melvin Junior Rainey pleaded guilty to one count of felon in possession of ammunition. MELVIN JUNIOR RAINEY, age 38 of Lakeland, Florida, entered a guilty plea in federal court before the Honorable Gregory A. Presnell, United States District Court Judge. The count to which he pled guilty carries a minimum mandatory sentence of 15 years' imprisonment up to life imprisonment, a fine up to \$250,000 and a five year term of supervised release. A sentencing date has not yet been set.

In open court today Rainey admitted that he was in possession of .22 caliber ammunition on or about November 10, 2001, in Polk County. Because the defendant is a convicted felon, he is prohibited from possessing either a firearm or ammunition.

This is another case indicted as a part the Department of Justice program "Project Safe Neighborhoods" - a nationwide gun violence reduction initiative with strong support from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF). U. S. Attorney Paul Perez is

coordinating the cooperative effort here in the Middle District of Florida with federal, state and local law enforcement officials and calling our effort "Project Safe Neighborhoods - Operation HALT the Violence!". The objective is to reduce violent crime by locating and seizing unlawfully possessed guns and then swiftly prosecuting the offenders using both federal and state gun laws.

The case was investigated by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF), the Lakeland Police Department and the State Attorney's Office for the Tenth Judicial Circuit of Florida. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney John F. Rudy, III.